



# Supreme Council 33° of the The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for Australia

## Administration Handbook Notes for District Recorder

### **Preface**

This handbook is intended to assist administrators in the discharge of their various responsibilities. The information contained herein is not intended to be exhaustive, but to provide direction where the Regulations are silent. It must also be noted that this document is not intended to supplant the primacy of the Regulations and in all cases where that document provides guidance, it is to be acknowledged.

The duties of the District Recorder can be identified under the following categories:

- duties to the District;
  - duties to the Supreme Council;
  - duties appertaining to the District Chapters and Councils; and
  - duties appertaining to the Higher Degrees.
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## Duties to the District

### 1. Chapter and Council Summonses

- The District Recorder should check the particulars of each summons received from within the District.
- The Chapters and Councils are to send a hard copy or single electronic copy of each summons, in any popular document format (e.g. MS Word, Open Office, PDF), to the District Recorder at least seven (7) days before the meeting date.
- It is also recommended that a copy of each District Chapter summons (and Council summons, as appropriate) be circularised to every current Sovereign within the District – to foster visitation and a sense of fraternity and communality across the District.

NOTE: It is recommended that the circulation copy not include any personalisation – recipient names, outstanding dues statements, etc. However, if the file received by the District Recorder includes these details they should be removed before onwards transmission to the mailing list.

### 2. Supreme Council Certificates and Jewels

- The forwarding of application papers to the Grand Secretary General after a perfection or elevation, and for joining, re-joining or affiliating brethren (where requested by the Brother), triggers the production of a Supreme Council certificate.
- It is recommended that the District Recorder be the nominated recipient of Supreme Council certificates, and 50 year jewels, so that details can be confirmed and the District database updated before they are delivered to the District Commander for him to make the presentation. The District Recorder will need to annotate the application forms before sending to the Grand Secretary General to ensure his is the delivery address.

### 3. Orders of Merit Nominations

- The District Recorder may be requested to provide information to assist the District Commander in making annual nominations for the Orders of Merit Awards. A report of all current (and past) holders of the Orders of Merit can be generated from the District database.

### 4. 50 Year Membership Jewels

- The District Recorder will be required to make application to the Grand Secretary General for all brethren within the District who have reached 50 years' membership within the Rite. A report of all brethren reaching that milestone can be generated from the District database.
- It is recommended that the application be made a few months before the anniversary meeting so that a certificate and jewel might be available for presentation thereafter.
- The District Recorder might reasonably be requested to provide information on the membership of the brother, to assist the District Commander in making this presentation. Some suitable information (e.g. dates and memberships, honours and offices served) can be obtained from the District database.

### 5. Visitations

- The District Recorder is expected to support the District Commander when he is officially visiting each Chapter and Council within the District at least twice in every year, with one visit being on the occasion of the annual enthronement (or installation) meeting.
- On the occasion of official visits, the District Recorder will introduce the District Commander.
- The District Commander may require the District Recorder to wear Evening Dress for official visits, but normal Masonic attire can be worn for any other visitation, unless otherwise directed by the District Commander.

### 6. Communication

- The District Recorder is expected to maintain productive and regular communication with the District Chapters and Councils, including for:
  - a. circularisation of Supreme Council reports, annual returns, circulars, and forms;
  - b. communications from the Regional or District Commander;
  - c. distribution of Supreme Council certificates (and 50 year jewels) for presentation; and
  - d. circularisation of meeting summons for Chapters, Councils and Higher Degrees.

- All Chapters and Councils are required to communicate with the Supreme Council, Region and District through their District Recorder.
- A (generally) convenient form of communication for general messages is via email, and the use of this medium is encouraged by Supreme Council and within the District. However, all of the following are required to be sent to the Grand Secretary General via traditional post:
  - a. proposed changes to Chapter or Council By-Laws, only after regular adoption by the Chapter or Council (with three copies of the By-laws signed by the Sovereign, Grand Commander and District Commander, in original);
  - b. papers for candidates, joining or re-joining members and affiliates (in original);
  - c. Annual Return (with cheque for annual capitation and any other noted fees).

#### **7. Supporting District Chapters and Councils**

- The District administrations are servants both of Supreme Council and their District and it is therefore a fundamental responsibility to provide support to the District when and where required. The District Recorder is therefore expected to assist the District Commander in supporting the District Chapters and Councils in whatever reasonable form may be required, including:
  - a. advice on regulations, procedures or protocols or standards;
  - b. identifying and/or providing educational material (e.g. approved lectures);
  - c. promotion of the Rite; and
  - d. identifying and/or providing ceremonial assistance.
- The District administration are also expected to strengthen the District wherever possible (e.g. fostering membership, standards, education) and the District Recorder is therefore expected to assist in this important responsibility by:
  - a. maintaining appropriate standards of dress, personal behaviour, and ritual performance;
  - b. being conversant with the Regulations, history and customs of the Rite and the District Chapters and Councils;
  - c. demonstrating unity within the District administration; and
  - d. fostering fraternity across the District.

#### **8. District Database**

- The District Recorder is expected to regularly maintain a database of membership within the District Chapters and Councils.
- The database will record details of all current (and possibly past) members within the District Chapters and Councils, their membership history within the Rite, current contact information, offices held and other roles or duties undertaken for the Rite, as known.
- An up-to-date copy of the database will be provided to the District Commander on a regular basis, or as otherwise required.

#### **9. Annual Membership Survey**

- Towards the end of each year, the District Recorder should conduct a survey of membership which requires Chapters (and Councils for brethren not in a District Chapter) to provide confirmation of current Craft membership, including the name, number and constitution of Craft lodge(s) of all brethren within the District. This survey data can be generated from the District database.
- The survey should also be used to confirm contact details (home and postal addresses, contact phone numbers and email addresses, as well as correct or complete any missing details from the standard Supreme Council membership record, including:
  - a. full name;
  - b. date of birth;
  - c. civil or military titles and/or honours;
  - d. 3° date with Craft Lodge name, number and constitution; and
  - e. 18°-33° details (i.e. dates Chapters and/or Council names, numbers and constitutions, as applicable).
- A list of all current members, including full name and current contact details (postal address, home phone, mobile phone and email, as appropriate) should be provided with the survey for each Chapter and Council within the District. This report can be generated from the District database.
- The results of the survey are to be used to update the District database and any changes should also be reported to Supreme Council no later than **31<sup>st</sup> December**, annually (to ensure they are known before the annual returns are generated).

### **10. Annual Statistical Summary**

- The District Recorder is required to prepare the annual statistical summary (Excel spreadsheet) of Chapter and Council membership movements for the year ended **31<sup>st</sup> December**, annually. This data can be exported from the District database.

### **11. Annual District Report**

- The District Recorder will also assist the District Commander by providing data for his annual District Report, which must be completed for the year ended **31<sup>st</sup> December**, annually.
- The report is a summary of all activities within the District over the year, including:
  - a. membership movements (candidates, joining and re-joining members, affiliations, deaths, resignations, exclusions, honorary or emeritus memberships conferred) and details of current dual memberships within District Chapters and Councils;
  - b. attendance levels at meetings;
  - c. details of papers/lecture or talks presented within Chapters or Councils;
  - d. charitable donations or benevolent activities undertaken by the Chapters or Councils;
  - e. honours accorded brethren; and
  - f. any other significant events.

### **12. District Meetings**

- The District Recorder will prepare the agenda, under advisement of the District Commander, prepare and circularise summonses and records the minutes of District (administrative) meetings.
- The District Recorder should circulate the minutes of the previous meeting with the summonses, to expedite the business meeting.
- The minutes of all meetings are to be confirmed in open meeting, and should be jointly signed by the District Commander and the District Secretary.

### **13. District Levy (optional)**

- The District Commander will determine any District levy, annually, and the District Recorder will then report that levy to the District Chapters and Councils, the Region and to Supreme Council.

### **14. District Accounts**

- The District Recorder will be responsible for administering District finances during his tenure.
- The District Recorder is therefore required to maintain, in stewardship, a suitable bank account for the District. To this end, it is recommended that any one (1) of the District Commander and District Recorder be empowered to operate that bank account for and on behalf of the District.
- The District Recorder is also required to prepare an annual statement of District accounts for each financial year ending 30 June, annually.
- Each annual statement of District accounts must be duly audited by an auditor approved by the District Commander and then countersigned by the auditor and District Commander before being copied for District records and the original sent to the Grand Secretary General before **31<sup>st</sup> January**, annually.

### **15. Annual Budget**

- The District Recorder may also be required to prepare an annual budget to assist the District Commander in setting a levy on District membership for the coming year.
- The budget must be sufficiently detailed so as to be able to guide financial decisions within the District for the coming year and might include recommendations for any levy.
- It is recommended that any budget be made available in due time so that any decision on a District levy might be communicated to the District Chapters and Councils before their final meeting in the calendar year.

## Duties to Supreme Council

### 1. Meeting Reports

- Copies of all Meeting Reports from all Chapter, Council and Higher Degree meetings must be sent to the Grand Secretary General **no later than seven (7) days after the meeting date**.
- Before forwarding, the District Recorder is to ensure that each meeting report is complete and correct, that it is accompanied by correct and properly completed application forms (e.g. for candidates, joining and re-joining members and for affiliates) and where a fee is payable, that the correct fee is attached (payable to 'Supreme Council') or the details of a direct deposit.
- Each meeting report and associated paperwork sent to the Secretary General is to be accompanied by a covering letter.

### 2. Annual Returns

- The District Recorder is required to check the preliminary annual returns sent from the Grand East, ensure all current membership details are correct and report any changes to the Grand Secretary General as soon as possible.
- Once the returns are delivered to Chapters and Councils, a copy of each will be provided to the District Recorder – these need to be added to District records. The District Recorder is then to follow-up with the Chapter Recorders and Council Grand Secretaries to ensure the returns are paid by the due date (currently **31<sup>st</sup> January**, annually).

## Duties appertaining to the Higher Degrees

### 1. Candidates

- The District Recorder will provide a list of brethren qualified by their time in membership of the preceding degree to the District Commander for his consideration – this should be done by the start of December each year so that approved brethren might be issued invitations, replies received, approvals and regalia obtained well in advance of the planned Higher Degree meeting date in the coming year. A report of time-in-membership qualified brethren can be generated from the District database.
- **IMPORTANT:** There is an agreed calculus or set of criteria, within the Region, for considering brethren for advancement to the Higher Degrees, and it is the responsibility of the District Commander to ensure the minimum standard is reached before any brother is approved for issuance of an invitation to advancement. The District Recorder may reasonably be required to provide information from the District database to support any nomination of a brother for advancement.
- For any brother approved by the District Commander, the District Recorder will send the brother a letter of invitation, with a copy of the current Higher Degree application form. A letter of invitation should include details of cost (Degree fee and ritual), proposed date for advancement and a suitable RSVP date with a note about the need for the candidate to procure his regalia.
- Once a reply is received, the District Recorder is to ensure that all relevant details on the application are complete, and that the requisite fee is attached, before forwarding the application to the District Commander for his approval.
- Once the signed application is returned, the District Commander is to send the application to the Regional Commander for his approval.
- Once a reply is received, the District Recorder is to make a final survey of the application to ensure that all details are complete, attach the application fee and forward the application to the Grand Secretary General for production of a certificate and if required the appropriate ritual.
- The District Recorder will then confirm the proposed date of advancement with the District and Regional Commanders and then write again to the candidate, finalising details for the meeting and reminding him of the need to have both his current and new regalia available at the meeting - with sticky labels attached (so that it does not become confused with that of other brethren during the investiture).
- **IMPORTANT:** If an application is rejected by the Regional Commander, the District Commander will advise the brother personally of the reasons provided by the Regional Commander and indicate how this deficit might be overcome in order that his application might progress at a later date. To obviate this situation and any ensuing embarrassment, it is recommended that the Regional Commander approve, in principle, any candidate before he is invited to apply for advancement to the Higher Degrees. It is further recommended that no potential candidate be informed of this matter before tacit approvals are confirmed and the letter of invitation is sent.

### 2. Higher Degree Summonses

- As soon as the date is confirmed for a Higher Degree meeting, the District Recorder should begin to assemble teams for each degree, as appropriate. A first point of reference, in conjunction with the District Commander, when assembling a team, if available, should be the district database, which contains reports of brethren who have held office or performed ritual roles at recent Higher Degree meetings across the District, otherwise, copies of previous Higher Degrees summonses might assist. **NOTE:** The Regional Commander will determine who is to perform the accolade in each degree, being his prerogative to do so, and he should be asked this question at the time the team is being assembled.
- Once details of the team and of all approved candidates are in hand, the District Recorder will prepare a summons for the Higher Degree meeting.
- The format of the Higher Degree summonses are at the discretion of the District Recorder, but, a number of items are required to be included and need to be checked for completeness and currency, prior to distribution:
  - a. The details of the Sovereign Grand Commander, Regional Commander, District Commander and Most Wise Sovereign/Grand Commander (titles, full names and honours, as appropriate), are to be noted on the front page, or banner, of every summons:
    - i. Sovereign Grand Commander: M:: P:: Bro. ...
    - ii. Regional Commander: M:: Ill:: Bro. ... (or V:: P:: Bro. ..., as appropriate)
    - iii. District Commander: V:: Ill:: Bro. ...
  - b. Details of the date, place and timing of the meeting held under the authority of the Regional Commander with details of required dress.
  - c. Details of any dining fee to be paid by brethren attending the associated banquet, the contact person and latest reply date.

- d. The agenda for a Higher Degree meeting is to be included on the summons, as follows:
- i. for a Consistory:
- the agenda header should include the degree title and motto, as follows:
    - Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, 32°
    - Amor Vincit Omnia – Love Conquers All
  - the list of Officers and brethren assisting in the degree, including:
    - Officers:
      - Grand Commander-in-Chief
      - Lieutenant Commander
      - Grand Prelate
      - Grand Master of Ceremonies
      - Assistant Grand Master of Ceremonies
      - Grand Captain of the Guard
      - Grand Organist
    - Assisting:
      - Responsibilities
      - Accolade
      - Lecture “A” (may be delivered by more than one Brother)
      - Lecture “B” (may be delivered by more than one Brother)
      - The Royal Secret
  - to open the Consistory at (time)
  - to advance as a Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret: (followed by the full names of each brother being advanced)
  - to close the Consistory
- ii. For a Tribunal:
- the agenda header should include the degree title and motto, as follows:
    - Grand Inspector Inquisitor Commander, 31°
    - Justitia Omnibus – Justice For All
  - the list of Officers and brethren assisting in the degree, including:
    - Officers:
      - Enlightened Presiding Officer
      - Grand Prelate
      - Grand Master of Ceremonies
      - Deputy Grand Master of Ceremonies
      - Assistant Grand Master of Ceremonies
      - Grand Organist
    - Assisting:
      - Congratulatory
      - Reception “A”
      - Reception “B”
      - Reception “C” (note: the three parts of the ‘Reception’ may be delivered by a single brother)
      - Induction
      - Accolade
      - Investiture
      - Communication of Secrets
      - Lecture (note: the lecture may be delivered by more than one brother)
  - to open the Tribunal at (time)
  - to advance as a Grand Inspector Inquisitor Commander: (followed by the full names of each brother being advanced)
  - to close the Tribunal

NOTE: As the authority to conduct the Higher degrees is vested in the Regional Commander and stated on the notice paper, each meeting is held in conjunction with a warranted Council or Chapter within the District, there are no administrative matters dealt with at Higher Degree meetings (e.g. no minutes, correspondence, accounts, or general business).

NOTE: No toast list need be included on a Higher Degree summons since the meeting is being hosted by a Chapter and Council.

- It is required that a copy of each Higher Degree summons be sent to the following brethren:
  - a. all members of the Higher Degrees within the District;
  - b. the Grand Secretary of each 30° Council within the District;
  - c. all members of the 33° within the Region;
  - d. the Regional Recorder; and
  - e. all other District Recorders within the Region.

### 3. **Advancement**

- Whilst a meeting of the Higher Degrees may receive more than one candidate at a single working of the degree, for the sake of dignity and to ensure that every candidate is made to feel the importance of his advancement, it is strongly recommended that only a small number of candidates (e.g. no more than the total number of Chapters within the District) be advanced at any working of each degree.
- The District Recorder will ensure all requisites for Higher Degrees ceremonial are available for each meeting, including:
  - a. the Higher Degrees Appearance Book;
  - b. a pedestal covered in a red cloth (with gold fringe, if possible)
  - c. a V.S.L.; and
  - d. a copy of the Grand Constitutions (c1786).

For a Consistory, additionally:

- a. 32° Tracing Board;
- b. Supreme Council certificate for each brother being advanced;
- c. a copy of the current edition of the 32° ritual for each brother being advanced; and
- d. any other item required by the Supreme Council, Regional Commander or District Commander.(Notice Paper)

For a Tribunal, additionally:

- a. an unsheathed sword;
- b. a pair of scales;
- c. Supreme Council certificate for each brother being advanced;
- d. a copy of the current edition of the 31° ritual for each brother being advanced; and
- e. any other item required by the Supreme Council, Regional Commander or District Commander.

### 4. **Completion**

- After each Higher Degree meeting, the District Recorder must generate a meeting report for each degree worked and includes the following details:
  - a. Meeting details (date, place, degrees worked, attendance numbers); and
  - b. Candidate details (full name and degree)
- The meeting report is copied for the District records and then forwarded to the Grand Secretary General, with a covering letter, **within seven (7) days of the meeting date**.
- Finally, the District Recorder updates the District database, including the requisite details of each brother's advancement, and the details of all District brethren who took office or assisted with the other ritual roles. The District Recorder will also update the Excel spreadsheet record of attendances at meetings within the District (details which are useful for the annual District report).

### 5. **Communication with Candidates**

- It is to be noted that all communication with a candidate is to be through the District Recorder, firstly to avoid confusion over facts or requirements, and secondly to ensure that the District Recorder controls the process of completing an application.

## Miscellaneous Notes

### 1. *Chapter and Council By-Laws*

- All Chapter and Council By-laws are based on a uniform set prescribed by Supreme Council. A copy of these standard By-laws is available from the Grand East. No proposed amendment to any by-law can abrogate Supreme Council regulations; nor should by-laws include matters already covered by the Regulations.
- The proposition to amend any by-law must be received as a notice of motion and appear on the agenda of the subsequent Chapter or Council summons. The summons will detail the proposition and include the name of the proposer. The motion is approved/rejected as per the Regulations.
- All proposed changes to the By-Laws must be approved by the District Commander and then by Supreme Council before they are in force.
- Three (3) copies of the complete amended by-laws, signed by the Sovereign or Grand Commander, are to be sent to the District Recorder for him to confirm the competence of the proposed changes before forwarding all copies to the District Commander for his approval (signature and date).
- Once a reply is received, the proposed the by-laws will be sent to the Grand Secretary General, with a covering letter, for approval of Supreme Council.
- Once a reply is received, with two (2) copies of the approved By-laws, one (1) copy will be retained in the District records and the other returned to the Chapter or Council for distribution to all their members.

### 2. *Honorary Membership*

- Honorary membership may be conferred by a Chapter or Council, sparingly, only on those brethren who make considerable contributions to the Chapter or Council over a long period of membership.
- Chapters and Councils will continue to pay capitation fees to Supreme Council and any levy to the District for all honorary members
- The proposition to confer honorary membership must be received as a notice of motion and appears on the agenda of the subsequent Chapter or Council summons. The summons will detail the proposition and include the name of the proposer. The motion is approved/rejected by simple majority.
- Proposals for honorary membership do not need to be approved by the District or Regional Commanders or by Supreme Council, but each should be informed by the District Recorder as soon as practical after the conferral. NOTE: A change of membership status will appear on the Meeting Report of the relevant Chapter or Council.
- A copy of any advice of award of honorary membership is to be kept in District records.

### 3. *Emeritus Membership*

- Emeritus membership may be conferred by a Chapter or Council, sparingly, only on those brethren who make considerable contributions to the Chapter or Council over a long period of membership and who are no longer able to attend meetings (e.g. due to age, ill health or infirmity).
- Chapters and Councils will not pay capitation fees to Supreme Council or any levy to the District for any emeritus members after the current year's fees are paid.
- The proposition to confer emeritus membership must be received as a notice of motion and appears on the agenda of the subsequent Chapter or Council summons. The summons will detail the proposition and include the name of the proposer. The motion is approved/rejected by simple majority.
- Proposals for emeritus membership do not need to be approved by the District or Regional Commanders or by Supreme Council, but each should be informed by the District Recorder as soon as practical after the conferral. . NOTE: A change of membership status will appear on the Meeting Report of the relevant Chapter or Council.
- A copy of any advice of award of emeritus membership is to be kept in District records.

### 4. *Affiliating Brethren*

- Any member of the Rite affiliating from a sister Supreme Council is required to provide a clearance certificate or letter and affirm in writing that he maintains no filiation with any other Supreme Council at the time of application.

### 5. *District Stock*

- The District Recorder may decide to maintain a minimum stock of items regularly required within the District Chapters and Councils:
  - a. Supreme Council Regulations;
  - b. Copies of Rituals (including the Intermediate Degrees 4-17° and 19-29°);
  - c. Lapel Pins; and

d. Lapel Roses.

- The District Commander may choose to present each new member with a lapel pin and he will thus reimburse the District for the cost of any pin provided from District stock.
- All stock is procured from the Grand East, via the current order form, and payment is required with every order including the postal charge.
- A copy of every order form and receipt is to be kept in District records – for preparation of annual accounts and audit.

## **6. Change of Status Reporting**

- Any proposed change of status must be approved by both the District Commander and Regional Commander before being sent to the Secretary General.
- A Change of Status Form must be raised by the District Recorder, recording all relevant details of the proposed change for a District Chapter or Council, or for a new warrant. Rationale for a requested change of status include:
  - a. Reception from another Supreme Council
  - b. Change of Name
  - c. Change of Meeting place
  - d. Change of meeting pattern
  - e. Amalgamation
  - f. Recess
  - g. Surrender
  - h. Centenary/Rededication
- Before forwarding to the Supreme Council, the District Recorder is to ensure that the report is complete and correct and that it is accompanied by any requisite paperwork (e.g. proposed amended By-laws).
- A copy of the form is to be kept in District records.
- Each form and any associated paperwork sent to the Secretary General is to be accompanied by a covering letter.

## **7. Dispensations**

- Any District Chapter or Council proposing a change to a meeting (e.g. date or place) is required to have received the approval of the Regional Commander and be provided with a signed Dispensation before the changed meeting details may be promulgated.
- The District Recorder is required to communicate the request from a Chapter or Council for dispensation to the District Commander and Regional Commander, and then provide their reply to the Chapter or Council, with the dispensation, as appropriate.
- A copy of the dispensation is to be kept in District records.
- The Regional Commander may require payment of a dispensation fee and the District Recorder may be required to procure that fee and forward it to the Regional Commander. Payment should be made out to “The Supreme Council.”